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## CAPTAIN THOMAS MORRIS ON GARRICK

Students of American history are acquainted with the reprint by Mr. Thwaites<sup>1</sup> of the interesting *Journal* of Captain Thomas Morris, dated "Detroit, September 25, 1764." To the value of that narrative Mr. Thwaites has done full justice in his introduction. Students of literature, however, have no such ready access to Morris's *Letter / to a / Friend / on the Poetical Elocution of the Theatre / and the / Manner of Acting Tragedy*, which immediately follows the *Journal* in his *Miscellanies / in / Prose and Verse*, London, 1791. This volume is a rarity, and of Morris himself little is known.

The Captain's chief interest from his testimony was "the Poetical Elocution of the Theatre." On this subject he regards himself as a master, and thus attacks Garrick. "To recite verse, especially rhyme, in a perfect manner, is, I believe, the rarest gift bestowed on man. England produces men excellent in every other art and science; but an excellent reciter of verse, public or private, I have not heard since the days of Quin; and I almost despair of ever hearing another. I consider it as a lost art; and it would give me extreme satisfaction to be instrumental in its recovery." Now, although the critic concedes to Garrick "many transcendent qualities: his animation, though often introduced improperly; his thorough conception of his character; his skill in managing his voice, which I think was his greatest excellence, though frequently abused; his graceful deportment; and lastly, though blemished with trick, his mute play," still he insists, "Garrick and verse were not made to agree."

The gravamen of the charge is that Garrick "played from the head and not from the heart." For that reason the Captain dissents from the view that Garrick acted from the same inspiration with which Shakespeare wrote. Rather, he says, "No two men ever differed more than Shakespeare and Garrick: the one was all nature, the other all art; but art of an exquisite kind: yet still it was art. Shakespear wrote from his heart; Garrick played from his head." Blinded by the actor's merits, the public had come to approve his foibles—"the sudden and unnatural transition of voice; the studied, and always premature, start; the pantomime gesture; and all trick . . . miserable expedients, fit only for a booth in a fair, not for royal theatres of the metropolis." In dialogue he grants Garrick "a tincture" of the skill he so warmly commended in Mademoiselle Du Menil; but censures Garrick's soliloquy as "unnatural" and exposing "his false emphasis." He "could not endure Mr. Garrick's hobble. He spoke blank verse very ill; rhyme, despicably. . . . I have been told that Mr. Gar-

<sup>1</sup> *Early Western Travels*, 1748-1846. Cleveland, 1904.

rick said of Mrs. Siddons, that he wondered how she got rid of her ti-tum-ti. I know not how she got rid of her ti-tum-ti, but I know how, with all her excellence, she got her hobble-ti-trot: She got it, as all others got it, from Mr. Garrick." Upon Quin he bestows the compliment,—“a perfect reciter of verse,” and finds his worthiest successor in Mrs. Pope. As for Garrick, “he sacrificed sense to sound; and his sound itself was discord.” So long as Garrick is taken for its model, the Captain despairs of the English stage.

He concludes his *Letter*, therefore, with a proposal to come in person to the rescue. Merely to drop Garrick and follow nature “would not bring us to perfection for ages.” Models are needed; and these the Captain finds in Quin for reciting and in Du Menil for acting tragedy. Though they are gone, he has learned to recite, as did Quin, “from nature”; and from Du Menil he has received the art of acting tragedy. He can imitate her manner at least, “and that must serve.” He offers to transmit the traditions of Du Menil. “Thus may Garrick’s imitative acting and bad recitation be lost forever; and tragedians learn to move the heart by true feelings, and delight the ear with poetic melody.”

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#### A LUCKLESS MONTHLY AND AN ILL-STARRED MAIDEN

In March, 1698, appeared at Amsterdam, “chez Louis Val.” according to the title page, the first number of a periodical with the attractive name *L'Elite des Nouvelles de toutes les Cours d'Europe*. Contemporaries unanimously attribute it to Gatien de Courtitz, better known as Courtitz de Sandras. At this time he was beginning his sixth year in the Bastille, where similar enterprises had lodged him in 1693, but apparently he enjoyed considerable liberty (see Ravaisson, *Archives de la Bastille*). Only three numbers of the journal appeared: the first contains the *nouvelles* of January, February, and March, the second those of April, the last those of May. The work is cited as having run from January through May, and this has led to the erroneous statement that five numbers appeared. The following explanation from the *Avertissement* may suffice to correct this error: “Il semblera que je m'avise un peu tard et même à contre temps en quelque façon de mettre la main à cet ouvrage, maintenant que l'année est commencée; mais comme elle n'est pas encore bien avancée, j'ai cru que je pourrais reprendre ici tout ce qui s'est passé de plus considérable dans les mois de janvier et de février, afin que si ce petit livre a le bonheur